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## Notes on some representatives of the Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa latirostris* Raffles in Southeast Asia

by D. R. Wells

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An earlier paper (Wells 1977) offered arguments based largely on status for reducing Deignan's Southeast Asian Brown-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa williamsoni* to a subspecies of the similar, much more widely occurring Brown Flycatcher *M. latirostris*. Subsequent records of intermediate plumage among migrants to the Kuala Lumpur area of Peninsular Malaysia have supported this proposition. It is now apparent, too, that the brownish ventral streaking characteristic of *williamsoni* also occurs as a post-juvenile (first winter) plumage of the subspecies *M. l. 'poonensis'*, as evidenced by many specimens in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) (BMNH) from all over the Indian subcontinent collected between 7 August and March. Likewise, one specimen (BMNH 1919.12.20.164) of 3 *M. l. ?siamensis* dated 10–18 May from Dran, in the highlands of southern Vietnam, is fairly boldly streaked over the breast and sides of the throat, although the other 2 are virtually unstreaked. There is no independent way of telling the relative ages of these 3 specimens, but all are in fairly worn plumage, and in mid May are likely to have been on their breeding ground (cf. Deignan 1957).

The notes that follow give range extensions and evidence of the existence of additional tropical representatives of *M. latirostris* in 2 areas of Southeast Asia.

### BORNEO

Borneo was included in the range of *M. latirostris williamsoni* on the strength of a subspecific intergrade collected in southern Sarawak in November 1956.

This action has been vindicated by the discovery of a second Sarawak specimen (BMNH 78.5.20.33) which agrees in detail with typical *williamsoni* in first-winter plumage. It lacks a locality and date but is moulting primaries 8–10 (descending), which on the evidence of birds of this age-class collected elsewhere is likely to have been a late northern winter event. There are no other Bornean records, although Captain D. M. Simpson recorded migrating Brown Flycatchers at an oil drilling platform off the west coast of Sabah from 10 August during 1981. This is five weeks previous to the earliest records of Palearctic forms on Borneo itself (Smythies 1981), but is within the known passage period of *williamsoni* into Peninsular Malaysia (Wells 1977).

Unexpectedly, a small, dark greyish brown specimen from Tawau district, eastern Sabah, provisionally identified by Thompson (1966) as a Dark-sided Flycatcher *M. sibirica*, also proves to be a Brown Flycatcher. The shape and proportions of the bill, diagnostic among Eurasian flycatchers, should not, perhaps, have been missed; but otherwise this bird has no obvious Sundaic affinities and before the description of Philippine *M. l. randi* (Amadon & DuPont 1970) would certainly have been a puzzle. The specimen from Tawau and *randi* are evidently close, but the Tawau individual is sufficiently smaller than *randi* to warrant separation. I call it

### ***Muscicapa latirostris umbrosa* subsp. nov.**

*Description.* Upperparts, face, sides of the throat, a broad pectoral band, flanks and thighs dull grey-brown, darkest on the wings and tail, paler below. The rest of the underparts, under wing-coverts, marginal feathers of the eyelids (forming a fine ring round the eye) and the base of the loreal feathers white, chin and throat finely flecked and abdomen finely and obscurely streaked, grey-brown. The outer secondary coverts retain fine, abraded rusty buff tips that form an inconspicuous wing-bar probably more extensive in fresh-plumaged individuals. In the dried skin the feet, claws, upper mandible and apical half of the lower mandible are horn-black and the basal half of the lower mandible yellowish white.

*Distribution.* The type locality.

*Type.* British Museum (Natural History) No. 1982.2.1, adult male, collected on 8 July 1963 in evergreen mixed dipterocarp forest, elevation 230 m, at the Quoin Hill cocoa research station, Tawau district, Sabah, Malaysia by A. D. Garcia. Original field number ADG 174.

*Measurements of the type.* Wing (flat and straightened) 60 mm, tail 49.2 mm, tarsus 12.5 mm, gape 15.1 mm, anterior margin of nostrils to bill-tip (nasoipi) 7.4 mm, and width of the bill at the anterior margin of the nostrils 4.5 mm. Shortfall of the tips of the primaries, numbered descendantly, behind the tip of the closed wing (in mm, averaged over the 2 wings): primary one (10.5), two (9.4), three (8.7), four (7.5), five (3.5), six (1.3), seven (0), eight (0), nine (5.3) and ten (29.1).

*Other material seen.*

*Muscicapa l. latirostris/cinereoalba* (not distinguished in this study) (18). China: Szechuan 2 ♀♀, Yunnan 2 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀, 2 oo (BMNH, USNM). Malaysia: 1 ♀, 4 oo (University of Malaya, BMNH) plus a large number of migrants of

presumed Palearctic origin handled live for ringing (records of the University of Malaya bird-ringing project). Indonesia: West Java 1 ♂, 1 ♀, 1 ♂ (MZB), Sulawesi 1 ♀ (BZM). (For abbreviations see Acknowledgements.)

*M. l. ?siamensis* (9). Thailand: Chieng Mai and Lampang 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀ (USNM, TISTR). Burma: Tenasserim 2 ♂♂, 1 ♀ (BMNH). Vietnam: Da Lat district 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀ (USNM, BMNH, ZDUS).

*M. l. segregata* (6). Indonesia: Sumba island 3 ♂♂, 1 ♀, 2 ♂♂ (AMNH, MZB).

*M. l. randi* (8) Philippines: Luzon 3 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀ (DMNH), Negros 1 ♀ (BMNH).

*Remarks.* At 60 mm the wing of the new type is 5 mm shorter than in any other non-moulting Brown Flycatcher examined, a difference exaggerated by not more than one mm of feather wear. It resembles *M. l. randi* and *segregata*, and differs from all known continental populations, in having a large outer primary (10), and the outer wing proportionately broad such that the tip of primary 9 falls well behind, rather than well in front of, the tip of primary 5 (compare Fig. 1 in Wells 1977). *M. l. segregata* is otherwise paler, more ash-brown than *umbrosa*, with a larger bill (nalespi and width at nares, respectively, not below 8.2 and 4.8 mm (n=6)); while *randi* is slightly greyer and has a wholly unpigmented lower mandible. A rather brown, immature *M. l. randi* from Negros (BMNH 87.12.30.517) is closest to *umbrosa* on colour and is also its nearest geographical neighbour—symptomatic of a possible link via the southern Philippines.

From its near mid northern summer collection date and worn, unmoulted plumage, including flight feathers, it is possible that *umbrosa* was breeding or had recently bred locally. The shape of its wing implies sedentariness but is interpreted with reserve, since several *randi*, with an equally rounded wing-tip, have been netted at lights set to intercept the nocturnal autumn migration stream through a mountain pass in Luzon (cf. McClure 1974).

How closely *M. l. umbrosa* and the geographically more remote *segregata* of Sumba island are related is harder to guess. Stresemann & Stresemann (1974) have suggested that the latter, southern hemisphere isolate arose by the austral summer breeding of Palearctic migrants whose wintering range subsequently retreated behind Wallace's Line. Palearctic subspecies do resemble *segregata* in colour tone, and the biometrical characters shared by *segregata*, *umbrosa* and *randi* might therefore be convergent. Alternatively, since *umbrosa* occurs within the present 'wintering' zone of northern migrants, these blunt-winged subspecies could be interrelated relics within a formerly more continuous (? ancestral) eastern tropical breeding range, to some of which derived Palearctic-breeding migrants still return each northern winter. The common supposition that *segregata* (but not, apparently, *randi* ?) has fully speciated lacks conviction when almost nothing is recorded of its behaviour or habitat preferences. Its southern hemisphere breeding schedule (Siebers 1928) might facilitate interbreeding if out-of-season sexual recrudescence were actually to occur in long-distance, trans-equatorial migrants overshooting the Sunda Shelf.

#### THAILAND

Except for *M. l. segregata* on Sumba, Lesser Sunda islands, there has been no direct evidence of breeding by Brown Flycatchers anywhere in Southeast Asia. That some breeding occurs in the Indochinese subregion has nevertheless been inferred from a few specimens (including the types of *siamensis*

Gyldenstolpe) collected up to 4 weeks after the departure of recognisable winter migrants (Gyldenstolpe 1916, Riley 1938, Deignan 1957). All have come from mountains.

During the latter half of May 1981 a search for additional evidence was made on Doi Inthanon, the highest peak of the Thanon Thong Chai range, NW Thailand. The search was hampered by lack of information on likely preferred habitats, but eventually produced good views of a minimum of 5 individuals, including one definite pair. One, on 18 May, was singing in the canopy of deciduous *Pentacme*/dipterocarp-dominated 'pa-daeng' forest at about 800 m altitude, not far below a pine-covered crest marking the lower limit of the montane evergreen zone. Nearby, 2 days later, a pair of adults was found carrying food. For 20 minutes while observers were close they flew about, vocalising frequently (calls indistinguishable from those of Palearctic migrants), and from their behaviour were undoubtedly tending young. On the same morning at 1400 m a further calling adult was located in a clump of young *Pinus khasya*, and another heard nearby, by which eventually the first was attracted away. Possibly the same 2 birds were later seen foraging in small broad-leaved trees beneath mature pines. On 23 May a fifth adult was encountered in a similar situation at about 1000 m altitude. On Doi Inthanon these apparently attractive, rather open *Pinus khasya* groves occur only at the deciduous-montane evergreen forest ecotone (Robbins & Smitinand 1966) and no Brown Flycatchers were found during extensive searches above and below this boundary.

At close range in the field all individuals were plain, dull ash-brown shading to white from the centre of the abdomen to the lower tail-coverts, with a dark-tipped mandible. From Palearctic migrants, recorded in north-west Thailand by Deignan (1945), they differed by their brown (rather than whitish) chin and throat, concolorous with the breast (which was faintly streaked), lack of an eye-ring (conspicuously white in Palearctics) and loss through wear (by spring) of almost all pale edging to the secondary coverts and tertials. Unmoulted, though probably later breeding, *M. l. latirostris* from Szechuan and Yunnan, southern China (USNM, BMNH) show markedly more wing patterning in June and July.

No birds were collected and Doi Inthanon's population has not been identified. Types of the single recognised Indochinese subspecies, *siamensis*, also dated late May and considered by Deignan (1957) to have been resident on the Khun Tan range, 80 km east over the Chiang Mai plain from Doi Inthanon, nevertheless differ by having the chin and upper throat pale, a narrow greyish white eye-ring and the lower mandible all yellowish (Gyldenstolpe 1916). An adult male topotype (USNM 250230) examined in this study has these characters, being mainly off-white below sullied ash-brown on the breast and sides of the throat, and unstreaked.

Though less rufescent than *M. l. williamsoni*, this last bird and a similar male and female (USNM 278528, BMNH 1919.12.20.164) collected on 10 and 18 May at Dran, Da Lat district, within the pine zone of the highlands of southern Vietnam (Brunel 1978), are a shade more pinkish, less greyish brown on the upperparts than Palearctic *M. l. latirostris* in any plumage stage cycle. In a second female from Dran, dated 17 May (ZDUS), this tone is still more pronounced, and is brightest on the upper tail-coverts, as apparently it is in the holotype of *siamensis* (Gyldenstolpe 1916). A further 5 specimens

collected far to the west: including 2 females (TISTR 53-4128, 53-4130) from 1100 m altitude at Huai Mae Sanam, 60 km SW of but in the same range of hills as Doi Inthanon and 2 males and a female (BMNH 86.4.1.1146, 1148 & 1149) from Moulmein district and the approaches to Mt Mulayit, north Tenasserim, some 300 km SSW of Inthanon, are a close match. All are adults collected between late February and May, and none shows more than a trace of pale edging on the secondary coverts and tertials.

Ventral plumage is more varied. The Huai Mae Sanam females approach Doi Inthanon birds in being, if anything, even more solidly brown over the chin, throat and breast, and showing still less white on the abdomen. The others are largely off-white below finely and obscurely streaked ash-brown variously from the throat to the upper breast and flanks, or wholly unstreaked. BMNH 1919.12.20.164 from Dran is unusually heavily streaked, as already mentioned. Under wing-coverts range from whitish at Dran to whitish or buff (as in *williamsoni*) in northwest Thailand and Tenasserim. Doi Inthanon and Mae Sanam birds are the only ones without a contrasting eye-ring, which elsewhere varies from buff (again as in *williamsoni*) in Tenasserim via greyish white to white further east. Variation in lower mandible colour may be due partly to *post mortem* fading, from apically blackish as seen in live birds on Doi Inthanon to all yellow-horn as, for example, in specimens from Dran, 2 of which are stated to have had dark-tipped bills when collected in 1918. Those from Huai Mae Sanam, collected in 1960, are intermediate. Wing formulae are all as described for *M. l. siamensis* by Wells (1977).

Without more widespread fieldwork – unlikely in the foreseeable future – the taxonomic significance of this variation will be difficult to gauge. However, all the hill ranges on which these Brown Flycatchers have been found and supposedly breed strike roughly south and are separated by lowland flood-plains, across which gene-flow is likely to be slight. Isolation in a restricted altitudinal vegetation zone, even if some populations ultimately meet via the main outer tropical mountain mass to the north, may therefore have been sufficient to produce more than one localised subspecies.

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## Twenty-one bird species new or little known from the Republic of Colombia

by John W. Fitzpatrick and David E. Willard

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In reviewing and organizing recent accessions to the bird collection at the Field Museum of Natural History (FMNH), Chicago, we have encountered a number of specimens of birds previously unknown or poorly known from the Republic of Colombia. Most of these are specimens taken (1969-1971) by Kjell von Sneider in the Andes of extreme southern Colombia, near the border between Putumayo and Narino, an area that until recently had not been studied by ornithologists. Mr von Sneider's collection comes principally from 5 localities that will be mentioned repeatedly in the species accounts to follow. All are in humid forest, varying from upper montane cloud forest (La Victoria) down in elevation through the upper tropical zone (Estacion Bombeo de Guamuez; Llorente) to lowland tropical forest (San Antonio Guamuez). The entire collection contains 2344 specimens and 358 species. Here, we report only the specimens that present substantially new information about bird faunas and distributions in southern Colombia. One additional species new to the republic, *Odontophorus melanotus*, is reported from a collection made by M. A. Carriker, Jr.

The 5 von Sneider localities are as follows (coordinates from Paynter Traylor 1981):

*San Antonio Guamuez, Putumayo*, elev. 400 m, about 0° 31' N, 76° 45' W; above the town of San Antonio, on the Rio Guamuez; dates in Paynter & Traylor (1981) should read Oct-Nov, 1969 and March-April 1971.

*Estacion Bombeo de Guamuez, Putumayo*, elev. 3000 ft (900 m), about 0° 40' N,